WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

SUBPOENAED BY GRAND JURY

Secretary Frank Morrison of the American Federation of Labor Responds To Court Summons and Takes Records with Him.

Washington, Feb. 3.--On Monday January 29, a subpoena was served on the Secretary of the American Federation of Labor to appear before the Federal Grand Jury now in session in Indianapolis, Ind. Feb. 1. The writ requires Secretary Morrison to produce cancelled checks, and records of all receipts and disbursements made by the American Federation of Labor or by himself, between April 23, 1911 and January 26, 1912. In accordance therewith Secretary Morrison has taken to Indianapolis, two large trunks filled with books, records and letters relating to the financial operations of the American Federation of Labor. When called upon for a statement, Mr. Morrison said, "I appreciate this opportunity to show all of our books and have the Federation's accounts investigated by the Federal authorities."

UNITED MINE WORKERS

Indianapolis, Feb. 3.--The convention of the United Mine Workers of America had several resolutions before it, which if adopted would have withdrawn the coal miners from the American Federation of Labor. The resolutions, however, met with but little support, - the Committee recommending non-concurrence in such a plan. A resolution favoring the United Mine Workers renewing their membership with the International Mining Congress was adopted. The question of endorsing the Socialist Party was defeated in the convention, the committee recommending a substitute, which was adopted by a vote of 515 in favor of the substitute and 155 against it. A Special Committee appointed to consider the strike of the Button Workers at Muscatine, Iowa, reported in favor of appropriating $500.00 for their relief, and their report was adopted. It is also reported that instead of annual conventions, it has been decided to hold conventions every two years; the election of officers also to take place every two years instead of annually. Provision is also made to inaugurate the recall. Ten per cent of the membership may initiate a recall, and on petition of 30 per cent an election shall be held.

LAW DECLARED LEGAL

Columbus, O., Feb. 3.--The Ohio law, limiting women's labor to 54 hours a week has been declared constitutional by the State Supreme Court.

BRANDEIS ARRAIGNS TRUST

Washington, Feb. 3.--Louis D. Brandeis, the Boston attorney, testifying before the Stanley Steel Investigating Committee of the House made some extremely pertinent remarks with reference to the treatment of labor by the gigantic steel trust. Mr. Brandeis asserted that Judge Gary recently said that the treatment accorded employes of the steel trust compared favorably with any corporation at any time in the history of the world. This statement was contradicted by Mr. Brandeis and referred to the report of the United States Commissioner of Corporations for corroboration. "During May 1910, 50,000 men or 20 per cent of all employes working and engaged by the corporation worked 84 hours or more a week, a 12 hour work day including Sunday." F. A. Reed, counsel for the corporation objected to Mr. Brandeis' testimony, declaring that the Committee is not vested with any authority to investigate the labor conditions. Chairman Stanley over-ruled the objection and Mr. Brandeis continued. "I am informed that a very large number of these men are old at 40 years; I am surprised that they are not incapacitated at 30. Comparing this condition of affairs with that of the slave owner to the slave, and of this corporation to its employes, to my mind this is one of the most serious crimes perpetrated in the United States. Every slave was regarded as valuable property, from pure selfishness the slave owner did not mistreat his slaves any more than he would his animals, they were valuable assets, but these men of the corporation are not valuable assets." Mr. Brandeis urgently requested the Committee to subpoena John A. Fitch of the Russell Sage Foundation, to appear before it to substantiate his charges. Referring to statistics concerning employes who worked at blast furnaces, Mr. Brandeis continued: "Out of the 25,000 men who run 165 blast furnaces, 12,26 per cent earn between 12 and 14 cents an hour; 16.96 per cent earn between 14 and 16 cents an hour; 37.51 per cent earn between 16 and 18 cents per hour; and 18 to 20 cents an hour for 13.70 per cent. Of 96 per cent of the employes, none of them earn over 20 cents an hour."

O'CONNELL GETS LOVING CUP

New York, Feb. 3.--At the testimonial banquet given in honor of James O'Connell, Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor and President of the Metal Trades Department, a handsomely engraved loving cup was presented to him.

CONTEMPT CASE AGAIN

Washington, Feb. 3.--Testimony and refutation of the renewed contempt of court charges against Samuel Gompers, John Mitchell and Frank Morrison is scheduled to commence on Feb. 1.

STRIKE JUSTIFIED

New York, Feb. 3.--That the strike of the laundry workers against the conditions under which they have been compelled to work was in every way justified, was the report made recently to the State Department of Labor by the Committee named to investigate this matter.

Grocery deliverymen of Creston, Iowa, secured increase of $3 per week through strike.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

Washington, Feb. 3.—As noted in the News Letter of January 20, a petition has been presented to the President of the United States asking that a Federal Commission on Industrial Relations be appointed. In the February number of the American Federationist is to be found the petition in full, together with the names of those who signed it. This petition is favorable to Labor as a whole. In a circular just issued by a committee that is interested in securing the appointment of this Commission, there appears the following: "It is time that the light of publicity be thrown on the industrial relations in which families of plain working people are involved, – that the terms under which they are working be scrutinized and considered with calm deliberations, with justice for all, and in the interest of the common good. The working people of the country have never been afraid of the light – the cry of truth – they are certain that from such an impartial investigation of the terms of industry, the social conscience of the Nation will be awakened, and many abuses, expressed in terms of low wages and inhuman length of the working day and indecent sanitary conditions, will be eliminated and above all they will welcome a careful investigation of Labor's rights."

LAKE SEAMEN'S STRIKE

Washington, Feb. 3.—It is reported on reliable authority that the Lake Carriers' Association has under contemplation a scheme to educate seamen for the Great Lakes. It is also further reported that Mr. Colby, the president of the Pittsburg Steamship Company, (Maritime Division of the Steel Trust) made a statement to the last meeting of the Lake Carriers' Association at Detroit, Michigan to the effect that when the lake commerce moves again in its full strength there will be a serious shortage of skilled seamen. This fact emphatically demonstrates that the strike of the Lake seamen, now in its fourth year, is still effective.

CONTRACTS LET

Washington, Feb. 3.—Contracts for the new first class battle ships, Oklahoma and Nevada, have been signed by the Navy Department. The Fore River Shipbuilding Company will complete the Nevada at a cost of $5,895,00. while the New York Shipbuilding Company for $5,926,000 will construct the Oklahoma.

MUST PUBLISH ENDORSEMENTS

Washington, Feb. 3.—A measure has passed the House requiring the President of the United States to give publicity to every written or verbal endorsement of candidates for all federal judgeships from the Supreme Court down prior to the appointment of the judge. It came in the form of an amendment to the Evans' Bill and on the demand for a separate roll call, it was adopted by a vote of 148 to 82.

FIVE PERISH

Kemmerer, Wyo., Feb. 3.—Five men have been killed and between 15 and 20 injured by a dust explosion in the No. 4 mine of the Kemmerer Coal Company, and 9 of the injured are in a serious condition and are in the hospital at Rock Springs.

THE LATEST POSTAL ORDER

Washington, Feb. 3.—In a recent order issued by the Postmaster General there is included an Executive order from the President amending Civil Service rule XII., relating to removals and reductions of classified employes. It is rather a one-sided affair, done without question to cloud the situation, and practically gives no redress to any postal employe as far as removal or reduction is concerned. Under Section 2 of the order, it states: " A person whose removal is proposed shall be furnished with a statement of reasons and be allowed a reasonable time for personally answering such reasons in writing, but no examination of witnesses nor any trial or hearing shall be required except in the discretion of the officers making the removal. Copy of such reasons and answer and of the order of removal shall be made a part of the records of the proper department of office, and the Commission shall upon its request be furnished with a copy of the record in the case. The above procedure shall be followed in like manner in reduction in grade or compensation." But now look at the fourth section, in view of what is contained in Section 2: "The Commission shall have no jurisdiction to review the findings of a removing officer upon the reasons and answer provided for in Section 2 of this rule, nor shall the Commission have authority to investigate any removal or reduction unless it is alleged, with offer of proof, that the procedure required by Section 2, of this rule has been followed, or that the removal was made for political or religious reasons." Apparently the Post Office Department is determined not to permit an appeal from the decision of any department head.

SENATOR BORAH STRONG

Washington, Feb. 3.—At a hearing before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor there appeared recently James A. Emery, general counsel for the National Association of Manufacturers, who attacked the Hughes Eight Hour Bill, which recently passed the House, as being vague and ambiguous. This statement brought forth from Senator Borah, Chairman of the Committee, the following retort: "From reports of the Department of Commerce and Labor on the steel industry, it is shown that the United States Steel Corporation is paying millions of dollars in dividends, and have in their hell-holes men who have worked twelve hours a day, seven days in the week, and others who work eighteen to twenty-four hours in one shift. This is something no man who has taken an oath of office can ignore."

ANOTHER SYSTEM FEDERATION

Denver, Feb. 3.—A System Federation of the employes in the operative department of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, numbering approximately 3,000 has just been effected. This Federation represents the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, Order of Railway Conductors and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen. This is the first System Federation among the Brotherhoods to occur, and is following out the policy of the American Federation organizations in federating organizations on the Railway Systems employed outside of the operating department.

At Brooklyn, N. Y., the Butcher Workmen's unions have won the struggle for the nine and a half-hour workday; night work has also been done away with by regulating the starting time.

HARRIMAN STRIKE

Reports from Various Sections of Strike Territory Reveal Progress Being Made by System Federation.

Chicago, Feb. 3.—The President of an international union having made an extended tour of the West has just returned to Chicago. He was particularly interested in noting the effect of the Harriman strike on the operation of trains, and other instances in relation thereto. He reports that in his trip from Salt Lake to Ogden, Butte, Montana; Pendleton, Oregon; Seattle; Portland, Oregon, and then south to Los Angeles, trains were nearly all late, almost wholly due to defective equipment. From Los Angeles back by way of Phoenix, Arizona, to El Paso and San Antonio, Texas, trains were running from one hour to ten hours late; the same reasons applying as above noted. It was further stated that the strikers at the various points affirmed that the passenger service is being taken care of, but that the freight service was practically demoralized. It is a common practice now to use freight engines on passenger trains, thus showing the lack of repairs. It was stated that the situation as a whole looked extremely favorable to the strikers, taking into consideration the fact that there have been very few desertions, and also that it is rumored that the officials of the Harriman System are becoming disheartened over their attempt to deny the recognition of the System Federation. The outlook for the future seems to be bright.

SENATE EIGHT HOUR BILL

Washington, Feb. 3.—President Gompers made an argument before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor on Saturday, Jan. 27, for the passage of the Hughes bill, already passed by the House by an unanimous vote. President Gompers stated that the passage of such a law by Congress would aid materially in the general establishment of an eight hour work day for all workers, but he contended that no proposition will give more of an impetus to the general progress in this country among the people and further the understanding of civic duties than the eight hour work day. He criticised the opponents of the measure. When they appear before the Committees of Congress he said, they argue that such legislation is the proper function of the individual states and should be left to them; when they appear before the Committees of the State Legislatures, he added, they argue that no state should put its employes at a disadvantage as against other states by enacting an eight hour law and that such legislation should be general and undertaken by Congress. We are made shuttlecocks between the Federal and State battledoors.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Washington, Feb. 3.—The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization has just finished compiling the September immigration statistics. During the month mentioned there were admitted into this country 62,599 immigrants, the largest number of any single race being the Hebrews with 9,892; the next in point of numbers is the Southern Italians with 6,670; then the Germans with 5,359; English 4,943; Irish 4,295; Polish 4,138; Scandinavians 3,364; Mexicans 2,504 and the balance scattered among twenty-five or thirty other races.

LABOR UNIONS TO PROTECT INVENTIONS

Birmingham, Eng., Feb. 3.--According to the Iron and Steel Trades Journal a new rule proposed by five branches of the American Society of Engineers seeks to set up District Committees for the purpose of examining inventions and improvements submitted by members. The Committees would report to the Executive Council who would have the power to protect or patent inventions submitted, providing that in the opinion of experts such a course was justifiable. The profits would be divided between the inventors and the Society.

NEEDLE WORKERS' AGREEMENT

London, Feb. 3.--A dispute arose recently between the scourers and the employers in the needle trade. The demand was for a minimum wage and a bonus of twenty-five per cent. The Needle Trade Association agreed to an increase in wages amounting to an all around advance of ten per cent. Under the agreement the wages of putters-up and glaziers have been increased from $6.33 to $7.30 a week, and the wages of the washers and eveners from $5.11 to $5.84 a week.

WAR ON HIGH PRICES

New York, Feb. 3.--War on high prices in vegetables for the poor of New York has been begun with the opening by a Committee of Clergymen and others of the first of what is proposed to be a series of sales places where the products of the soil will be transferred from the producer to the consumer without a middle man's intervention. A few days ago large quantities of carrots, potatoes, cabbages, beets, turnips and other vegetables were quickly disposed of at cost.

AN EIGHT HOUR DECISION

Boston, Feb. 3.--A decision that is far reaching has been rendered by Judge Ely in the first session of the Municipal Court, when he found that a contractor who had employed a night watchman in excess of eight hours was not guilty of violating the eight hour law. The point was raised by the attorney that a night watchman was not a working man within the meaning of the act of the Legislature, and the Municipal Court Judge apparently took that view of the matter and rendered the decision as above stated.

FATALITIES ON SEA

Washington, Feb. 3.--The Bureau of Navagation of the Department of Commerce and Labor has just published a report in which it is claimed the lives of 196 persons, with 325 American vessels, during the fiscal year of 1911 were lost. The loss of sailing vessels, principally by foundering, resulted in the drowning of 170 persons; with steam vessels 87 lives were lost. The principal disaster during the year was the foundering of the steamer Arkadia which sailed from New Orleans to Porto Rico with 37 persons on board and never has been heard from. In the foundering of the Pere Marquette Ferry in Lake Michigan, 27 persons were lost. In all 159 steam vessels were lost.

BOILERMAKERS' AGREEMENT

London, Feb. 3.—While the dispute in regard to the hours in the shipbuilding trade is in progress, there is an important ballot being taken by the Boilermakers' Association. Next March the National shipyard agreement expires, having lasted for three years, and the Boilermakers are to ballot as to whether they will continue the agreement as at present. The Society also submitted to the men the question of asking for an advance on present rates of pay in certain grades.

DISCHARGE NOTES DISPUTE

London, Feb. 3.—Three years ago the employers in the shipbuilding trade put into force the system of discharge notes. Last week the men at the Sunderland yards struck work, while at New Castle and other places there have been handed in notices to cease work. It looked at one time as if there would be a national stoppage in the shipbuilding industry, but at a conference just held the matter was partially settled It was mutually agreed that a conference to discuss a scheme of discharge notes should be held in the near future and that in certain yards the use of these notes should be suspended until after the conference. The object of these notes is to permit the employers to follow the workmen from shipbuilding yard to shipbuilding yard.

INVESTIGATION ASKED

London, Feb. 3.—The suggestion made by influential employers that the Trades Dispute Act Reform League should press for the immediate appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the circumstances attending recent trade disputes with a special regard to lawlessness, has received consideration from most of the trade union leaders. Mr. W. A. Appleton, Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions, said, "This activity on the part of the Trades Dispute Act Reform League is evidently a counterblast to the circulars issued by this Federation on the proposed amendment of the Trades Disputes Act a short time ago. The promoters of this agitation seem to forget that a Royal Commission could not very well be confined to examining cases of lawlessness. The whole question of the causes and consequences of strikes would have to be considered."

LONDON BAKERS' CAMPAIGN

London, Feb. 3.—The Executive Council of the Amalgamated Union of Operative Bakers and Confectioners acted in conjunction with the London District Board in preparing a program for new conditions, which will shortly be submitted to the employers. It is not intended to slacken the effort to get the Bakers' Eight Hour Bill passed into law next year, the new program being the intermediary stage between the average eighty hours per week which at present obtains, and the forty-eight hour week foreshadowed in the bill. This program includes a nine hour day and an increase in wages.

At Omaha, Neb., the painters and decorators have obtained a substantial increase without friction, andthe steam engineers have secured several new eight-hour contracts. There has also been a satisfactory increase in other organized trades.

BIG STRIKE IN AUSTRALIA

Washington, Feb. 3.—On Jan. 31 the following cablegram was received by President Gompers from Brisbane, Australia, and is self-explanatory:

"Samuel Gompers, President American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.: General strike declared; fifty unions out defense principles, involving hundred thousand souls; first simultaneous strike world's history; complete stoppage industry; funds urgently needed; communicate your affiliations; prompt assistance assures certain victory. Moir, Secretary Trades Hall."

READY TO TESTIFY

Washington, Feb. 3.—"I have always declared my readiness to appear before any properly constituted body to testify with respect to the activities of the American Federation of Labor, and if the Grand Jury sends me a subpoena, I shall willingly go." This is the statement given out by President Gompers after Secretary Morrison had been subpoenaed to appear before the Federal Grand Jury in Indianapolis.

CHILD'S BUREAU BILL PASSES

Washington, Feb. 3.—The Senate, after a prolonged debate, on Wednesday, Jan. 31, passed the Children's Bureau Bill by a vote of 54 to 20, there being only one important amendment to the bill. The bill met with considerable opposition, but Senator Borah, who was the author of the bill, was finally successful in securing its passage.

AGREEMENT DOUBTFUL

Indianapolis, Ind., Feb. 3.—It is rumored here that the conference between the miners and operators has reached a stage of practical deadlock. It had been hoped that a satisfactory agreement would be reached while the delegates to the convention were still in the city, but the outlook at this time is not hopeful.

TROUBLE OVER TAYLOR SYSTEM

Davenport, Ia., Feb. 3.—High feeling exists here over the fact that it has been announced by the Commandant of the Rock Island government arsenal that Taylor System shop cards are to be distributed within a few days. The union men in the arsenal have held meetings, and it is stated are inclined to refuse to accept the cards. No definite conclusion, however, has yet been arrived at.

NEW PRISON CONTRACT

Madison, Wis., Feb. 3.—The prison board of control of this state has just renewed the contract of the Paramount Knitting company for two years, for 1912 to 1914. The trade marks of this company are Navajo, Apache and Sioux hosiery. Edward Boyle, its attorney, was the prime agent in securing the extension of the contract. Ex-Congressman Kuestermann aided in securing the contract.

MATCH COMPANY TO FIGHT TRUST

New York, Feb. 3.—It is stated that a bitter fight is in prospect between the Nitedals Match Company of Norway, which has purchased 250 acres of land near Peekskill on the Hudson, New York, for the purpose of erecting a factory and manufacturing matches. It is also stated that the factory will contain new machinery, upon which the Company have the sole patents, through which they hope to revolutionize the industry. One of the machines to be installed does the work of several scores of persons. A log of wood and a roll of paper are placed in the machine. When human hands next touch the material, it is all bound up in packages containing one gross of boxes of matches ready for the consumer. If this be true, the terrible vocational disease known as phossy jaw will be eliminated from this industry, which is much to be desired.

MATCH BILL DISCUSSED

Washington, Feb. 3.—The bill introduced by Congressman Esch of Wisconsin, forbidding the use of phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, was discussed recently at a meeting ofthe Washington branch of the Women's Welfare Department of the National Civic Federation. Together with Mr. Esch, John Andrews of New York, Secretary of the American Association for Labor Legislation, spoke in particular of the work of the American Association for Labor Legislation in advocating the enactment of the match bill.

CAN DEPORT CHINESE

Washington, Feb. 3.—Chinese, like other foreigners, may be deported by order of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor and are not entitled to have a judicial determination of their rights to remain in this country. The Supreme Court has so decided, holding that the United States Circuit Court of Appeals was wrong in preventing the Secretary from deporting Wong You and four other Chinamen, alleged to have been smuggled into New York from Canada. Secretary Nagel said that the decision of the lower court greatly compromised his department.

TO CURTAIL EMIGRATION TO CANADA

Washington, Feb. 3.—With the object of checking the emigration of Americans, the Senate Committee on Public Lands, has reported favorably the Borah Bill. It is stated that Americans are now going to the Canadian Northwest at the rate of 100,000 a year. The Borah Bill proposes to make American land laws about as liberal as those of Canada. The period of enforced residence on land is reduced from five years to three years and a settler is allowed to absent himself as much as six months in any one year while perfecting his claim.

NEW INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Cincinnati, Feb. 3.—An invitation has been sent broadcast to union officials by the International Union of the United Brewery Workmen of America, inviting them to the opening of their new international headquarters, Vine Street near Hollister, this city, on Saturday, February 3.

CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES

London, Feb. 3.—The changes in the rates of wages taking effect in December, according to the Board of Trade Labor Gazette, affected 11,000 working people, all of whom received increases, the total amount being nearly $5,000 per week.

STATE OF TRADE

London Feb. 3.—In the 394 trade unions with a net membership of 788,986 making returns, 24,074 or 3.1 per cent were returned as unemployed at the end of December 1911, compared with 2.6 per cent at the end of November, 1911, and 5 per cent at the end of December 1910. Also returns from firms employing 447,047 workmen in the week ending December 23, 1911, showed an increase of 2.2 per cent in the amount of wages paid, compared with a month prior, and of 6.2 per cent compared with a year ago.

CHANGES IN HOURS

London, Feb. 3.—The changes in weekly hours of labor taking effect in 1911 affected 105,537 working people. Of these 4,337 had their hours increased by 13,905 per week and 101,200 had reductions, amounting to 574,140 hours per week.

GERMAN BOOK PRINTERS

Berlin, Feb. 3.—Journeymen compositors, machine tenders, correctors, stereotypers and electrotypers have a system of five year contracts in operation with the Journeymen Book Printers' Association. A new five year period under a re-adjustment of the scale of wages began on January 1. The scale of wages varies in the different cities in Germany, a ten per cent increase being the minimum secured by the printers, and ranging as high as 14.8 per cent increase, these figures covering fifteen of the principal cities in Germany.

WAR ON SPECULATION

Washington, Feb. 3.—A number of Members of Congress have instituted a camapign for the passage of the bill at this session of Congress prohibiting speculation in cotton futures. The purpose of the proposed bill will prevent gambling in futures in farm products, but will not harm the cotton or grain exchange that does a legitimate business.

ENGINEERS ASK INCREASE

New York, Feb. 3.—It is stated that the Locomotive Engineers of all railroads in the Eastern territory have made demands for a general increase in wages, ranging from fifteen to twenty-five per cent. The demands involve all railroads East of Chicago and North of the line of the Norfolk and Western R. R., and of the Ohio river.

At Auburn, N. Y., the Cement Workers secured a scale of $4.50 for finishers, $2.50 for helpers, 27½ cents per hour for mixers, and the nine-hour day without difficulty.